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Hill, Henry Wayland

George Washington and active, agressive...

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GEORGE WASHINGTON

AND

ACTIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE MASONRY

308
Box 72

BUFFALO CONSISTORY
164-168 DELAWARE AVENUE

ANCIENT ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE

VALLEY OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK

N. M. J. U. S. A.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

AND

ACTIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE MASONRY

BY

HON. HENRY W. HILL, 32° LL.D.

Knight of the National Legion of Honor of France, Grand Chancellor
Knights of Pythias of the Grand Domain of New York,
Former State Senator of New York and President
of the Buffalo Historical Society.

AT THE

BUFFALO CONSISTORY, FEBRUARY 22, 1919

HENRY W. HILL, 32°

28 March, 1920 - C.R.W.

ADDRESS

ON

GEORGE WASHINGTON

AND ACTIVE, AGGRESSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE MASONRY

BY

HON. HENRY W. HILL

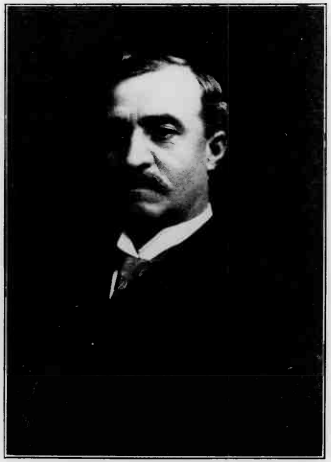
Honorable George K. Staples, 33°, Commander-in-chief of the Buffalo Consistory of Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Northern Jurisdiction, U. S. A., Officers and Members, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Appreciating as I do the complimentary and graceful introduction of our honored Commander-in-chief, I trust that whatever contribution may be made on this occasion will be some evidence of a desire on the part of one of its less conspicuous members to aid him in his great work in building up the Consistory, to which he has devoted his best efforts for years.

Washington

This day is designated by law, as it has been observed for a long time by custom, as sacred to the memory of our first President, General George Washington, who,

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE



HENRY W. HILL, 32°

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This day is designated by law, as it has been observed for a long time by custom, as sacred to the memory of our first President, General George Washington, who,

as it has been well said, "was first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Its observance has never included the usual gala festivities that characterize most holidays, but it is set apart from all other days to commemorate the noble life and transcendent services of the revered patriot, George Washington. Not only was he the Commander-in-chief of the American army during the Revolution and the dominating spirit of the forces, that laid the foundation of this "mighty and puissant nation," but that it was said of him "he changed mankind's ideas of political greatness." That is a great tribute and could be said of but few men in the history of the world.

When we recall the contributions in the arts of war and statesmanship as well as in the fine arts themselves to his age by Pericles, who, it was said, at the heighth of his power might have formed a Pan-Hellenic Union with Sparta and Athens as its leading states, and when we also recall the reforms accomplished by and the constructive colonial policy of Octavius, which led to the bestowal upon him by the Roman Senate of the honorary appellation "Augustus," applied only as "a title of respect and veneration," we will the more fully appreciate the force of the tribute to Washington. Others had changed the course of empires, but Washington had "changed mankind's ideas of political" institutions. He exerted all his great energies to check the tendency towards monarchy and to establish a republican form of government. He knew the temper and spirit of the colonists and their intense love of freedom. His was the guiding spirit that controlled their activities in their struggles for independence.

Constitutional Convention

He presided over the Convention of 1787, comprising sixty or more of the ablest deputies, that ever assembled in this country to formulate a constitution. Among them were Alexander Hamilton of New York, the greatest constructive genius of the country, James Madison of Virginia, the fourth president of the United States, Benjamin Franklin, Gouverneur Morris, James Wilson and Robert Morris of Pennsylvania, Charles C. Pinckney and John Rutledge of South Carolina, George Washington, Edmund Randolph and John Blair of Virginia, Oliver Ellsworth, William S. Johnson and Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Eldridge Gerry, Nathaniel Gorham and Rufus King of Massachusetts, William Livingston and William Patterson of New Jersey, Luther Martin of Maryland, Alexander Martin of North Carolina and Abraham Baldwin of Georgia. John Rutledge and Oliver Ellsworth later were chief justices of the Supreme Court of the United States and John Wilson, John Blair and William Patterson were associate justices of that Court. Edmund Randolph was Attorney-General under Washington and William S. Johnson was president of Columbia University. Nearly every member of that convention was prominent in some public activity. They were a galaxy of brilliant statesmen of great vision and profound learning. With equanimity and unfailing patience, Washington presided over that remarkable convention of great men, who at times were hopelessly involved in its perplexing problems. He pointed the way, however, to the solution of its problems. He harmonized their differences as to conflicting State and Federal sovereignty and led them onward and upward to the

conception and projection of an indissoluble union "of indestructible states," whose powers were to be subject to national sovereignty.

With the cooperation of the delegates from the thirteen colonies, he succeeded in founding a republic, wherein civil and religious liberty under law and all the privileges springing therefrom are guaranteed to its citizens. It was a stupendous achievement, so great that North Carolina and Rhode Island did not ratify the Constitution until after it was in force and Washington had been in office several months.

Gladstone declared that "the American Constitution was the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."

The Constitution

The Constitution was an evolution from various plans, submitted by several states and from suggestions made by the individual deputies, but Washington was the supervising architect of the colossal Federal structure and the presiding genius to approve the final plan and put it into operation. For eight years as President of the United States, Washington administered the affairs of the nation under it. He found it, as it ever since has been found, adequate for nearly all Federal Governmental purposes. Only eighteen amendments have been made to it in one hundred and twenty years. The first ten of such amendments were proposed in 1789 by the conventions, which ratified the constitution, as limitations upon the powers of the Federal Government and with Washington's aid became part of the constitution itself.

He devoted his untiring energies to the constructive work of building a republican form of government, which has endured the stress and strain of the succeeding years. It promises to endure such for centuries yet to come. Its comprehensiveness and elasticity, as construed by the Supreme Court, are such that it already serves as the fundamental law for forty-eight states and an hundred millions people.

In its execution Washington brought to bear upon it his masterful practical understanding of its original provisions, as John Marshall, also a Virginian, did his consumate judgment in its judicial interpretation. Out of the fullness of their knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the Confederation at the time and of the efforts of the framers of the Constitution to formulate a system of fundamental law adequate for all the purposes of independent self government, both Washington and Marshall made priceless contributions to the upbuilding of the nascent nation. In the long and steadfast adherence of those enlightened patriots to the application of the principles, imbedded in the Constitution, "there was neither variableness, nor shadow of turning." What a heritage has come down to us from the interpretation given to it by Washington, as its first executive, and by John Marshall, as its greatest expounder.

Let us do what we may to perpetuate the structure in all its harmonious proportions, which is adequate for all national governmental purposes.

Upon retiring from that office, the President was appointed Lieutenant General of the Army of the United States. Altogether, he was in the service of his state and county for upwards of thirty years and left a record of

uprightness and devotion, that has been a model, unparalled in the annals of American public service. He has ever since been known as "the father of his country."

Washington a Mason

From such records as are available to me the following information has been obtained in relation to Washington's masonic associations. He was made a master mason in Fredericksburg Lodge, Va., in 1752. That lodge held its original charter from a Provincial Grand Master at Boston. In 1788 Alexandria Lodge No. 22 in Virginia was chartered and George Washington was unanimously elected its first master. In March, 1789, he was elected an honorary member of Holland Lodge in New York, and the second chapter of Royal Arch Masons in New York was named after him, "Washington Chapter." With masonic ceremonies, he with the assistance of the Grand Lodge officials of Maryland and others laid the corner stone of the capitol of the United States in the city of Washington on September 18th, 1793. During his administration and after it, he received delegations and addresses from several Grand and other Masonic Lodges and made formal answer to some of them. In his answer to King David's Lodge in Rhode Island in 1790, he said in substance that the masonic fraternity is founded upon principles, which must be productive of private virtue and public prosperity and that he should be happy to advance the interests of the society. In his reply to the Grand Master of Ancient York Masons of South Carolina in 1791, he wrote, "I recognize with pleasure my relation to the brethren of your society." To the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts,

Washington wrote in 1792 that "the grand object of masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race," and in 1793 in reply to that same Grand Lodge, he speaks of the Society as one, "whose liberal principles must be founded in the immutable laws of truth and justice." Again in 1797 in reply to another address of that same Grand Lodge, President Washington, among other things, wrote, "My attachment to the society, of which we are members, will dispose me always to contribute my best endeavors to promote the honor and interest of the craft." As late as November 8th, 1798, in acknowledgement of the "Book of Constitutions" from the Grand Lodge of Maryland, among other things he said, "So far as I am acquainted with the principles and doctrines of Freemasonry, I conceive them to be founded on benevolence, and to be exercised only for the good of mankind." This was one of his last utterances of which we have record and later than his reply to a letter in relation to the Jacobinic attempt to injure masonry, in which Washington said, "I believe * * * that none of the lodges in this country are contaminated with the principles ascribed to the society of the Illuminati," thus vindicating the Order against the aspersions of its enemies.

For political or governmental reasons, Washington did not during or after the Revolution attend lodges deriving their warrants from English or British sources, but after the Revolution he was master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22, attended many masonic functions and was the recipient of many honors from American masonic bodies and delegations.

Washington was a power in the fraternity, which he loved and served. How much of his patience and hu-

mane temperament may be attributable to his masonic study and associations, we do not know, but it is reasonable to assume that he derived something from the teachings of an organization, whose genius is constructive, as evidenced in its operative efforts as well as in the formation of innumerable lodges in all civilized countries, illustrating its speculative and fraternal activities.

In that Constitutional Convention were such Grand Master Masons as Benjamin Franklin, John Blair, Edmund Randolph and possibly other prominent members of the order.

In 1779 at Morristown, N. J., Washington's headquarters, several military lodges of freemasons were organized in the American army.

In 1784 General and Madame Lafayette were entertained at Mount Vernon by General and Mrs. Washington and Madame Lafayette presented to General Washington a beautiful masonic apron of her design and workmanship.

On April 30th, 1789, in New York City, the oath of office as President of the United States was administered to General Washington by Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor of the State of New York, who was also the Grand Master of Free and Accepted Masons of the State.

In 1792, for more than a century, St. John's Lodge No. 1 of Newark, New Jersey, yearly convened on his birthday to commemorate the masonic virtues of Washington and that is being done in other jurisdictions. In keeping with that commemorative fraternal spirit, it seemed on this occasion that I call attention to some phases of the constructive work of George Washington,

not very generally appreciated, for the builders of constitutions attract little popular attention in their quiet mental work, which is usually carried forward almost as noiselessly as the forces of nature clothe the fields with verdure, or illume the heavens with rainbows.

Historical Development

In the consideration of active, aggressive and progressive masonry, some attention may be given to its historical development.

If time permitted it would be interesting to trace the achievements of the craft from the building of King Solomon's temple down through the ages. From such records as there are, it appears that fraternities or guilds of masons were formed from skilled builders. In some ages, they were licensed and passed freely from one country to another to apply their skill in the building of the great architectural structures of Europe. They enjoyed "trade secrets" and "exclusive privileges of fixing prices for their work and labor independent of the laws of the countries" wherein they were engaged. When in Venice, I learned that the glassblowers of Venice still retain their "trade secrets" and transmit them from father to son, but to no one outside of their guild.

It is quite likely that Hiram, King of Tyre, instituted corporations of architects and mechanics to assist in building King Solomon's temple. Syria, Asia Minor and some parts of Europe afford evidences of the structures of the skilled builders of the early Christian era.

This history of operative masonry is drawn from archaeological and structural sources as well as from official records. The latter extend farther back than the

year 1717, when the Mother Lodge of the world was instituted in England. Antiquarians are prone to trace the origin of the order to still earlies times. By some it was contended that the ancient arts and mysteries of the Egyptians, the Essenes, the Roman Collegia, or the Culdees were the sources, whence sprang the Order. From archaeological researches, it now appears that the mechanic and fine arts of Egypt, Babylonia and Persia were far advanced and their structures were the products of skilled artisans, builders and sculptors. Mr. Fort in his Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry says that "it may be safely asserted that the junction of Byzantine corporations with Teutonic guilds afforded the substantial basis of subsequent lodge appointments and ritualism, such as have descended to modern Freemasonry." Through the centuries there has been a progressive evolution in Masonry and modern Freemasonry is the embodiment of the sublime religious teachings of the Holy Bible.

Still there was another succession of the operative masons of the Middle Ages from the ancient mysteries of Egypt, Persia and Greece, in all of which there was taught the doctrine of a life beyond this earthly life, and whose devotees aspired to attaining such knowledge as would enable them to participate in the felicities of a future life. That came down through the Roman Colleges of Artificers, whence sprang the masons of Como, one of the most beautiful and central places in Lombardy. It was the birthplace of the elder and the younger Pliny and a noted resort during the Roman period.

Magistri Commacini.

It was there that during the Middle Ages the Magistri Commacini were organized. They were architects and sculptors, who went about Italy and other parts of Europe, building Gothic structures and were known as "Traveling Freemasons." They were not, however, the modern masons, who trace their evolution from the British Freemasons, but they were skilled operative architects, builders and sculptors, possessed of trade secrets and enjoying exclusive privileges. After the decline of the Roman Empire, Mr. Hope maintained that the Lombardy associations were "Freemasons" and that they were the first to endow architecture with complete and connected systems of forms. "They were used," he says, "in building Gothic structures from the Baltic to the Mediterranean." I have seen many of them, but I will mention a few only of the more notable ones.

Milan Cathedral.

That was nearest to Como and is one of the best known. It is cruciform in shape, with the nave and two side aisles and two others to the transcept. It was built of white marble. Its interior length is 486 feet, its width 189 feet and its nave 157 feet high with a tower 356 feet high. It will accommodate 40,000 people and is the second largest cathedral in Europe, St. Peter's being the largest. The roof is built of blocks of marble and is supported by 52 pillars. The original architect is unknown, but in its construction, commencing in 1386 and extending over five centuries, Thomas Ashby, di-

rector of the School of Archaeology at Rome and author of "The Classical Topography of the Roman Campagna," and Horatio Robert Forbes Brown, editor of "The Calendar of Venetian State Papers" and "Venetian Studies," say, that "the designs of many master masons were followed, including that for its lofty, octagonal cupola by Giovanni Antonio Amadeo, one of the most noted sculptors of Lombardy. Many master masons were employed in its construction." They must have been impressed with its superb proportions and profusion of pinnacles, thousands of statues, sky-pointing spires, flying buttreses and lofty pointed arches, over its great nave and double aisles and elsewhere, all harmonizing with and accentuating its Gothic design, said to be "the noblest and completest style of architecture ever developed." It is located under the incomparably beautiful azure of the Italian sky, and within full view of the towering snow-capped Alps and Apennines, half surrounding it, with their innumerable white pinnacles, silently pointing skyward. In their uplift is nature's sublime prototype for that Gothic structure.

Ruskin says that "whatever in architecture is fair or beautiful is imitated from natural forms."

That Italian scene afforded the opportunity for the free exercise of the imagination of its architects in their efforts to reproduce in marble its pointed arches, lofty spires and aspiring vaults from what they saw in the mountains around about them. That awakened in them an appreciation of the sublime in nature. How well they caught the inspiration of that scene and portrayed it in marble is evidenced in that colossal Gothic production of bewildering details and intricate tracery, for

They "builded better than 'they' knew,"
as
"The conscious stone to beauty grew."

May not that mountain scene with its pointed peaks and numerous pinnacles, or some other sublime creation of the Supreme Architect of the Universe, have first revealed to human architects of creative imagination the beauties of the Gothic style for architectural construction? Certainly nature affords many examples of the pointed arch, lancet-window, beautifully shown in Ste. Chapelle in Paris, and tapering spires, and these must have impressed themselves upon the imagination of the builders of the great Gothic structures of Western Europe. The operative masons of the Middle Ages were among the first to use the Gothic style of architecture.

York Minster.

We may now pass to another monument to the architectural skill of the operative masons of England and consider briefly their activities in and about York, where Edwin, King of Northumbria, convened an assembly in the seventh century, A. D.

The story is more or less legendary and, therefore, may not be entirely historical. It is said, however, that charters of incorporations were freely given to various guilds. It is certain that the Culdees were at York as early as the 10th century and there maintained an hospital, known as "St. Leonards."

It will be remembered that York was the Roman Eboracum, where the Emperor Severus was buried and

where Constantine was proclaimed Emperor. The first English parliament was held in York in 1160.

There was erected the great York Minster, 524½ feet in length, 250 feet in width, with a nave 99½ feet high, and a central tower 213 feet high, and two western towers 202 feet high. Its east window was 76 feet high and 32 feet wide, and its west window was 54 feet high and 30 feet wide. The great east window was the largest in the Kingdom and has exquisite flowing tracery and its original richly colored glass of the 14th century. In the crypt of York, which is much older than the present structure, dating back to the 7th, 8th, 12th, or 13th century, may be seen the marks of fellowcrafts, clearly discernible in the stone work of the foundation thereof, thus establishing the existence of the rank of fellowcraft at a very early date as well as their activities in the construction of the crypt. Operative masons were employed in the construction of that great minster.

It is claimed by Vernon that into Kelso, Edinburgh and Melrose freemasonry was introduced as early as 1136 A. D.

Freemasons of the Middle Ages.

It is now generally conceded that the title "Free masons" did not originally include "Free and Accepted Masons" of the symbolic degrees, but that it included those skilled artisans, emancipated from local guilds or municipal regulations, that they might be able to travel and render services, wherever any great buildings were in the process of construction. They were architects and master-builders of the Middle Ages and were found in all the countries of Western Europe.

Mediaeval Architecture.

"Mediaeval architecture," says Paley, "was the visible embodying of the highest feelings of adoration and worship, and holy abstraction; the expression of a sense which must have a language of its own and which would have utterance in no worthier or more significant way."

Reims Cathedral.

That was well illustrated in the Reims Cathedral with its majestic facade, its wondrous tracery and lines of beauty, said by Arthur Stanley Riggs "to be the master work of Robert de Coucy and other master masons." In 1481 it was partially destroyed by fire and later restored.

Mr. Riggs also said that "the Cathedral was one of calm and sacrament, its atmosphere that of worship undisturbed with every detail of the vast edifice a materialization of the essence of praise. * * * * It remained the supreme creative monument of the most creative of the centuries, the thirteenth, the triumphant and harmonious fortissimo of the Gothic, forever an inspiration to art until in September of 1914," when it was destroyed.

Its loss to art is as irreparable as was the loss to literature in the destruction of the Alexandrian library. In its harmonious proportions and Gothic beauty was realized the force of the symbolism of Goethe, who said

"Architecture Is Frozen Music."

The Reims Cathedral was the efflorescence in art of man's highest conception of a temple, dedicated to the glorification of the Supreme Architect of the Universe. It was a rhythmic poem in stone.

Reims is in ruins as are other creations of master masons of the Middle Ages in devastated Northern France.

It ought to be a matter of gratification to members of the Order to know that operative masonry did so extensively participate in the designing and workmanship of many of the noblest architectural structures of the world. Its activities have been creative rather than destructive. Its monuments are strewn along the pathway of civilization. Those are evidences of the creative genius of its architects, its builders and its sculptors.

One of the latest master pieces of classical architecture is the "House of the Temple," erected by the Supreme Council of Ancient and Scottish Rite Freemasonry in the city of Washington after the general plan of the celebrated Mausoleum of Halicarnasus, costing a million dollars.

Masons' Marks.

The marks of masons are found on the stones of many of the buildings upon which they performed labor. Some of them are composed of mathematical lines. For instance, Free and Accepted Masons made right angles, horizontals and perpendiculars and declared that geometry was the foundation of masonry. The symbolism is somewhat extensive, but it would serve no purpose to pursue it. Its only importance is to establish the masonic origin and relationship between different structures. The universality of such marks indicates the presence of masons in all countries, wherein such marks are found. Such archaeological evidence is accumulating and incontrovertibly establishes the fact that operative masonry prevailed all over Western Europe during the Middle

Ages and that scores of lodges existed in the principal countries. Most of the abbeys and nearly all of the great cathedrals were the products of masonic design and workmanship. Sir Christopher Wren, a master mason, designed and rounded St. Paul's dome in London, one of the later, but none the less aesthetic productions in Britain.

Masonic Principles.

Operative masonry, however, was not limited merely to constructive activities. It extended through lodges to the inculcation of masonic principles, including mathematics and the secret work appertaining to the trades. Later these and the sublime principles, enunicated in the Holy Bible, were worked up into *superb ritualism* for the different symbolic degrees, ineffable, historical, traditional, philosophical and chivalric grades of speculative masonry. The principles of operative masonry are symbolically applied in speculative masonry. It gathers up into itself historically a fund of information of general interest to the craft in all lands and increasingly so, as that information is augmented by research and discovery. It is an honorable as well as a noble institution and inculcates not only religious, but also broad and humane principles. It is an active, aggressive and progressive institution. It has been so from its inception. Its membership is increasing in all civilized countries and it is carrying forward charities, benevolences and fraternal activities the world over.

Activities of the Buffalo Consistory.

The Buffalo Consistory, though the youngest in the state, is one of the most active, aggressive and progres-

sive. It has a membership of 4,400 masons, one half of whom have been received in the past six years. Its properties are valued at $319,178.89, and are yearly increasing in value. Its charities are many and include something for the blind, for the poor and for crippled children. It also provides for them some entertainment. During the last year it has extended its support to soldier-clubs over-seas and at home. It furnished entertainment for soldiers at the Consistory. It furnished headquarters and heat, light and janitor service for Red Cross work. It has extended its relief to unfortunate babies and the care of their mothers. It has found homes for the old and indigent. It maintains a large Bible class, a band and orchestra for the entertainment of soldiers and others wherever needed. It maintains a literary society and produces and presents original plays for the public. It has provided a meeting place for clergymen and co-operates in all civic movements. It has a growing library and its clubhouse is becoming a social center. It teaches patriotism, which Washington and the founders of this nation endeavored to inculcate in the minds of the men of that generation. Such patriotism was exemplified in the active, aggressive and progressive life of the late Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, a mason and the orator at the Grand Lodge of Masons at its meeting in New York in 1918. His soul was aflame with the spirit of loyality, fraternity and national righteousness.

Liberty Under Law.

The work of the founders of this republic must go on and the present generation be made to understand that constitutional liberty, or liberty under law, is not

unrestrained license; that equality of all before the law does not mean that the individual is not to be protected in his personal and property rights and thereby be deprived of the incentive for the exercise of personal initiative, enterprise and frugality, which characterize peoples, living under free institutions from those in countries where communistic and socialistic principles prevail. The civil and religious liberty, guaranteed by our constitution, is individualistic, and not communistic. The latter is foreign to our American polity. Washington and his colleagues in that constitutional convention entertained no communistic views, as its records show. We can do no better than to adhere to his teachings and to the fundamental principles of our government, as enunciated by its framers and by such expounders of the constitution, as John Marshall, Daniel Webster and Abraham Lincoln. In such unsettled times as the present, it is well to examine anew the structure of our free institutions and rededicate ourselves to their preservation. This is no time to countenance Russian Bolshevikism, nor any other institution of alien origin. There should be no undermining of American principles and institutions, lest that endanger the Republic itself. The members of this Order and of other fraternities will jealously defend this country, its institutions and its people against the insidious attacks of any deadly foe of law and order, a matter of far greater importance to Americans than was the recovery of the Holy Land from the Saracens to the Crusaders in the Middle Ages.

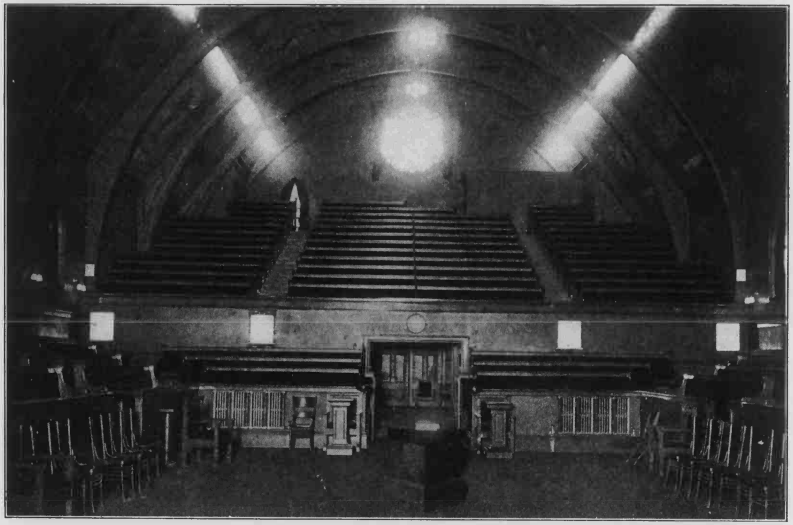
Lawlesness must be suppressed and the reconstruction of the normal activities of the world must go forward under the supervising genius of men like Washington,

who guided the colonies through the stormy Revolutionary period to the establishment of free institutions under the reign of law. Masons will zealously co-operate in all such rebuilding.

SUPERB EXEMPLIFICATION OF SCOTTISH RITE WORK.

The superb work of this Consistory in the exemplification of the various degrees, covering critical periods in the history of the world, is impressing its successive classes with the uplift and permanency of the immutable principles of justice and righteousness and their propulsive force in advancing the civilization of the race.

It is well, on this national holiday, and especially so this year at the close of the great war, when empires are crumbling and the parliament of the allied nations is deliberating upon the fundamental principles to be incorporated in a code of international law, to reflect upon the work of the founders of our government and consider what they did to secure the blessings of civil and religious liberty under law for themselves and succeeding generations, to the end that we may do all in our power to preserve these liberties for ourselves and transmit them in all their plentitude and power to those coming after us. In so doing and in fully observing all Masonic principles, we will fulfill our obligations to country, to humanity and to the Supreme Architect of the Universe.



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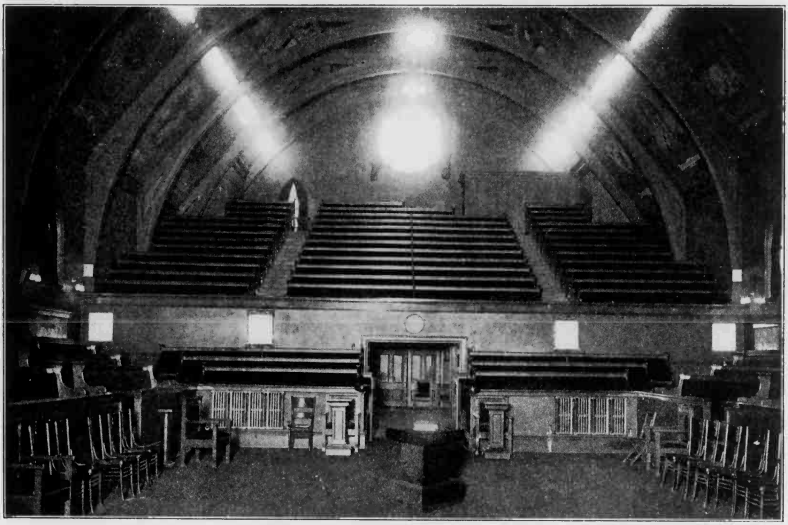

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